

2002 AFAP Update Paper

The delegate that will represent Fort Detrick at the HQDA AFAP Conference in November 2002 is SFC Ronald Meade, 1111th Signal Battalion. Alternate delegates are Ms. Sidonia Bowman, 1108th Signal Brigade and SPC Michelle Dickens, USAMRIID.

DA Issues

The following issues were sent to the MACOM (Fort Sam Houston) with recommendation to send forward to DA. The MACOM forwarded all nine issues for submission to the HQDA AFAP 2002 Conference.

ISSUE: Law Enforcement Specialty Pay

SCOPE: Law enforcement officers within the same locality do not receive the same specialty pay. For example, Fort Detrick Officers within the Military District of Washington receive substantially less specialty pay than other officers within the same district. The result is a high turn over and a shortage of personnel, which leaves Fort Detrick without adequate security.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Adjust specialty pay to be equal within each locality.

ISSUE: Rental to Post Housing Moving Expenses

SCOPE: Service members incur additional expenses when breaking their lease to move from off post to on post housing. BAH terminates when service members sign for quarters. This creates a financial burden due to losing already paid rent and deposits as well as penalties incurred by breaking the lease.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Change entitlements for military to establish continuation of the BAH allowance until the service member moves in quarters on post.

ISSUE: Household Goods

SCOPE: Transportation has no time limit for notifying service members of overweight household goods.

Notification has been known to take in excess of two years. Service members who do not receive timely notification are financially burdened by unexpected lump sum payments.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Establish time limit for transportation to notify service members of excess weight.
2. Institute an automated phone system and web site for easy access to transportation information.

ISSUE: Army Black Berets

SCOPE: The berets are impractical for everyday use. They provide no sun or winter protection because they lack a brim and ear flaps. Replacements are not readily available. There is a high cost for dry cleaning and maintaining a wool beret. The black wool berets are hot, not easily shaped, difficult to wear, and uncomfortable.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Reinstate the soft cap for normal duty.
2. Change Army Regulation 670-1 to mandate berets be worn only during ceremonies, special occasions, and with Class A, B, and utility white uniforms.

ISSUE: Tuition Rates for Military and Family Members

SCOPE: Education boundaries are causing military and family members to pay out of state or county tuition rates based on residency. These rates cause financial hardship for military and family members, often preventing continuing of education. Waiving or reducing these rates will allow more military and family members to continue their education, improving morale and quality of life.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Waive out of state or county tuition rates for military and family members.
2. Give lowest rates to military and family members.
3. Require department of defense to pay 100% of tuition rates for military members.

ISSUE: Heating and Cooling Systems in Army Barracks

SCOPE: Occupants cannot control the temperature in barracks rooms according to the climate outside. Soldiers are uncomfortable with their room temperature, which creates an unbearable living environment. According to Army Regulation 11-27, Energy Regulation, heating and cooling systems are turned on at specific times regardless of regional/seasonal conditions. Designing barracks rooms which have their own thermostat, will create a more comfortable living environment and will increase soldiers' morale, units' readiness, and retention.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Direct the Army Corps of Engineers to redesign barracks rooms to include the Variable Air Volume System (VAV).
2. Place an individual thermostat in each room to allow soldiers to control the system mode (heat/cool/fan) at any time.
3. Fund research, development, and implementation for new and existing barracks for VAV or a better system.

ISSUE: Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance Inaccessible

SCOPE: The income threshold to qualify for FSSA is set too low. According to DFAS, of 6000 applicants Army-wide, no one has qualified for the program. FSSA is aimed to remove military members from the USDA Food Stamp Program. Soldiers still have financial needs and cannot qualify for FSSA.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Amend the law governing USDA Guidelines to accommodate military personnel.
2. Revise DFAS regulation to lower the requirement baseline for this program.
3. Establish a military specific income level guidance chart.

ISSUE: AFAP/AFTB Funding

SCOPE: Funding for AFAP/AFTB to smaller installations is delayed because the installation is not a Power Projection or Power Support Platform. The funding received at smaller posts will be less than that received at larger posts. Smaller installations should not have to wait 3-5 years to receive funding.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Implement initial funding for AFAP/AFTB programs across the Army as soon as it is approved.

ISSUE: Limitation to Fundraising on Military Installations

SCOPE: Having to work around Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) and Army Emergency Relief (AER) severely hampers the fund raising abilities on military installations of organizations such as the Wives Clubs or Community/Military Auxiliaries. The fundraising from these organizations goes back to the military community through welfare disbursements and scholarships. Contributors are not going to refuse to donate to CFC and AER in order to go to a Basket Bingo or purchase an ornament or cookbook being sold by an organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Change Army Regulation 600-20 governing fundraising.
2. Limit the time frame to two (2) weeks for money to be designated for AER or CFC.
3. Combine the AER and CFC fundraising at the same time during the year and split the profits between the two campaigns.

Update of Local AFAP Issues

ISSUE: Computer Lab for Teens

SCOPE: Teens should have a computer lab comparable to the lab in the Youth Services building. As it stands now, the teens have to share the computers with school age children and other teens. The computers teens do have access to in the teen center often do not work effectively because they do not have Internet access or up-to-date software.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Purchase computer equipment for teens to have a separate computer lab.
2. Purchase up-to-date software.

Response from Patrice Harper: In Sept 02, Youth Service applied for a grant to receive 12 additional computers. Additionally, software was purchased for the Pre-SAT and SAT tutorial package. The lab has 2 computers with internet access. Additionally, teens have access to an 8-station computer lab during the following hours:

Monday-Thursday 2:30-4:30 and 5:30-8:00; Fri 2:30-4:30 and 5:30-9:00; and Saturday 2:30-9:00

Teen meeting was held on 20 July for input to begin purchasing new software NLT 2 August.

ISSUE: Youth Services Funding

SCOPE: Youth services are unable to supply teens with off-post activities, such as going to museums and visiting other bases, due to lack of funding. Previously, teens were able to take part in numerous off-post activities. Without the off-post activities teens get bored and sometimes they become self-destructive.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Increase funds to support more off-post trips and activities.
2. Have fundraisers to support off-post trips.

Response from Patrice Harper: Trips are still offered off post at least 2-3 times per month. The trips are adapted to meet budget requirements. Some teen trips have been cancelled due to lack of participation.

ISSUE: Bowling Center

SCOPE: The Ft. Detrick Bowling center is too small to accommodate the needs of all its patrons. The center has only four (4) lanes and if more than twenty (20) people wanted to go, like a youth center field trip, there would not be enough room and there would be a waiting period of more than an hour. It is unsafe for youth to be there and uncomfortable due to adults smoking and the availability of alcohol.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Make the center bigger to accommodate the needs of both the youth and adults.
2. Have a separate room for drinking alcohol and make a smoking policy for smokers to smoke outside.
3. Have special events for the youth such as family night and midnight bowling.

Response from Roger Melton: Cannot add onto a WWII building. A no-smoking policy inside the bowling center & CAC is effective 1 Oct 02. A Family Bowling Night is planned for 25 October, 22 November, and 20 December 2002.

ISSUE: Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) Program

SCOPE: JROTC would give teens and young adults something to do outside of school and youth services. It is a way to teach teens and young adults to respect themselves through military training and discipline. The program takes students into different classes that they wouldn't normally study in school. When their training is over they learn to think on their own and express their ideas and opinions clearly.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Implement a JROTC Program on post for pre-teens and teens.
2. Ensure that there are enough instructors to support the JROTC Program.

Response from Patrice Harper: ROTC is developed and coordinated through the public school system. This is not an installation driven program. Contact your local school system for further information.

ISSUE: Music Instructor

SCOPE: Unable to utilize existing music room in the teen center to its full potential, because there is no music instructor. There is a lot of equipment that cannot be used without supervision because of expense if the equipment is broken. If there was a full time music instructor the teens would have unlimited access to the room.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Hire an instructor that is capable of supervising and teaching.
2. Recruit volunteers experienced in music to assist with the supervising and teaching.

Response from Patrice Harper: A music instructor is available however, parents have to sign up & pay for private lessons. A Volunteer music instructor is available as of 10 Sept. Contact Youth Services for current schedule of availability.

ISSUE: Military Childcare for Shift Workers

SCOPE: Military shift workers at Fort Detrick and Site R have no available childcare to accommodate their duty hours. The lack of these services has a direct negative impact on mission readiness. Shift work is a large part of the mission at Site R and Fort Detrick.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Provide childcare for shift workers to accommodate all shifts.
2. Apprise MDW of the concerns and request their involvement.

Response from Patrice Harper: Providers cannot be forced to open for shift care. Providers are offered incentive to become a shift care home. State law stipulates if a home opens at night, it must be closed during the day. We do offer subsidy as a shift care home. There are 6 FCC homes available. Another option is for single soldiers and dual military to implement their short-term family care plan.

ISSUE: Childcare Spaces

SCOPE: The limited number of available childcare spaces often causes extended waiting periods for childcare. Military families often have to resort to non-military facilities off post, resulting in high out of pocket expenses. This causes financial hardship on the military family.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Expand facilities.
2. Increase staff.
3. Subsidize non-military care when spaces are not available.

Response from Patrice Harper: CDC staffing is not at full capacity. The existing facility is currently short staffed. Recruitments for CDC jobs are open. Subsidy for care is only allowed when the facility or provider is at the same national quality with NAEYC Accredited status.

ISSUE: Lost/Forgotten CYS ID card fees

SCOPE: Soldiers are forced to give CYS ID cards to dependents (ex: 1st graders and kindergarteners) to swipe in and out when they return from school. The children aren't responsible enough to keep up with it and are charged \$10.00 if it's lost and \$1.00 every time the child forgets their card.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Have a small box available, where the cards can be left at the CYS facility as an option, to prevent lost/forgotten card fees.

Response from Patrice Harper: Boxes for children to leave their cards were placed in the CYS facilities on 19 July 02.

ISSUE: CYS Hours

SCOPE: The CYS hours do not accommodate the military schedule. The duty day for some units starts and ends at the same time the CYS opens and closes, allowing for no travel time from CYS to the unit. This causes hardships with soldiers relating to punctuality, often resulting in disciplinary action.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Open the CYS at 0530 and close at 1830.
2. Implement command policy for the unit duty hours to accommodate available CYS services.

Response from Patrice Harper: CYS telephoned each installation unit to survey opening and closing times to accommodate physical training (PT). Survey shows the current operational hours, 0600-1800 enable patrons to participate in PT.